

## LRPO and Irradiator Operator Training a Success

### LRPO and Irradiator Operator Course Presented June 3-7, 2002

RSS once again held a combined Irradiator Operator and LRPO course in College Station, Texas. Thirty people attended the courses, the largest number in the past few years. The course was developed to present information that irradiator operators are required to know by our NRC license as well as general radiation safety and RSS program information useful to LRPO's.

Individuals from ARS, APHIS, FS, FSIS, and AMS attended, as well as representatives from the APHIS supported Sterile Insect Treatment programs in Mexico and Guatemala.

The combined course will likely be held again next year in June.



### OIG Audit In Progress

The USDA Office of Inspector General is conducting an audit of controls over chemical and radioactive materials in USDA. Auditors from OIG regional offices throughout the country are auditing 22 locations for control over radioactive materials, adequacy of management procedures and systems for complying with handling and disposing of radioactive materials, and adequacy of security procedures for preventing unauthorized access and removal of radioactive material. No significant problems have been found at the locations audited so far. During an OIG audit, we will help you provide documents or answer any of the auditor's questions. Please call the Health Physicist assigned to your location.

### NRC Inspection Complete

Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspectors visited the Radiation Safety Staff office from July 16-18, 2002, to evaluate the USDA radiation safety program. The evaluation included results of NRC inspections at six locations during the past year. The most significant finding (and likely violation) occurred at a field location when an NRC inspector discovered that the storage room for a portable moisture/density gauge containing sealed radioactive sources was not locked. Specifically, the room had two doors; the door leading in from the hallway was locked, but the door leading in from the conference room was not. The unlocked door was immediately locked and access to the storage room keys was limited. These timely corrective actions are viewed positively by the NRC

and may prevent any further enforcement sanctions. No other significant findings were identified during the other location inspections.

The NRC inspectors indicated that the USDA continues to effectively manage its radiation safety program through RSS and at USDA locations throughout the country. The inspection report should be available in the near future and RSS will make a copy of the report available to USDA locations.

**Note:** The NRC does not contact RSS when it performs an inspection at a USDA location. We rely on you (the location) to notify us during or immediately after an NRC inspection, regardless of the inspection finding.

## **Nuclear Gauge Train-the-Trainer Course to be Offered in December 2002**

RSS is planning to hold another Train-the-Trainer course for nuclear gauge permit holders at College Station, TX from December 3-5, 2002. There is no registration fee and lodging and per diem costs are covered through our training contract with Texas AM University.

This course qualifies the attendee as an approved trainer under the Department's radioactive materials license. They can then present a 1-day course in radiation safety requirements for nuclear gauge use; which is adequate training for being listed as a permit holder or associate user under the USDA license.

If you are interested in attending, now is the time to make sure that this training is listed in your next IDP and that travel funds are in next year's budget. Contact Jack Patterson at [jpatterson@rss.usda.gov](mailto:jpatterson@rss.usda.gov) for additional information.

**Do you have an idea for the next issue of the Radical Chronicle? Send your suggestions to RSS. We would love to hear from you.**

## **Permit Modification Procedures**

When changes in personnel occur, it is important to follow RSS procedures for adding and removing associate users from your permit and dosimetry account. To add an associate user to your permit, an RSS-10 form must be submitted to RSS. This form is available on our website ([www.rss.usda.gov](http://www.rss.usda.gov)) as well as in the Radiation Safety Handbook which was distributed several years ago. Please ensure you are using the version that has data fields for your social security number and date of birth. Unfortunately, there are forms in circulation that omit those fields. To obtain a dosimetry badge for an individual (mandatory for irradiator and nuclear gauge operators), please submit form RSS-70.

Submission of the two above referenced forms will result in the following:

- the individual will be recognized and added as an associate user to the permit thereby effecting a permit amendment and you will receive a revised permit stating such.
- the individual will receive a dosimetry badge from Proxtronic, Inc.

If you do not submit both of the required forms, only the submitted action will take place. We cannot assume your intention by sub-mission of only one form. There are some scenarios where you would only need to submit one form and not both. For example, your office has hired a brilliant new graduate student who will be performing research in your lab. You initially submitted an RSS-10 and an RSS-70 to add her to your permit and receive a badge for her. Your research associate would also like her to do work under his permit as well. The second researcher would need to submit the RSS-10 form to add her to his permit, but the request for a badge is not needed because she already

has one. She does not need two separate badges because she is working for two researchers. She does however, need to be listed on each researcher's permit.

The same methodology holds true when you wish to remove an associate user. (Please note: There is no form to fill out to remove an associate user. A written request to do so, by an informal fax, letter, or email is all that is required.) To cancel badges, submit the RSS-70 after filling in the designated fields for deletion. If you want both actions to happen you must complete both steps. Unless you specify that the badge service needs to be cancelled, you will continue to receive a badge for the associate user. We do not automatically cancel a badge because the individual is no longer on a permit. In the past, we made the assumption when you faxed us a note stating that an individual had retired or passed away, that the individual no longer needed badge service, but it is not always clear. In the example above, the graduate student is working for two researchers, if you faxed us a note requesting she be removed from your permit, we would remove her from your permit but not cancel her badge because she will still need the badge to continue her work with the second researcher. Bottom line: we do not know unless you tell us, so please specify your intentions.

We hope this article has been informative. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to call our office at 301-504-2440.

## Disposal of Unused Radioactive Materials

To improve security of radioactive materials, the NRC will emphasize the enforcement of its requirement for timely disposal of unused radioactive material and termination of inactive permits and locations. The NRC has observed loosening of access controls where radioactive sources are not used for prolonged periods. Therefore, permit holders are required to dispose of radioactive sources and terminate permits that have not been used in more than two years and for which there is no future use planned.

If you have materials that have not been used or a permit that has been inactive for more than two years, please contact RSS. We will help you comply with this requirement and assist you with difficult disposal issues.

## On-Line Rad Safety Management System Update

A contractor working with RSS, a team of permit holders, Location Radiation Protection Officers, and the USDA Radiation Safety Committee, have developed a prototype of our web-based, on-line radiation safety management system. We are fine-tuning the prototype and plan to begin production later this year.

We are committed to developing a management system that improves compliance with radiation safety requirements and makes your life easier. The RSS and the review team are dedicated to ensuring that the system manages as many aspects of your radiation safety program as possible. We are also dedicated to making the system easy to use.



## Did You Know...

The radiation warning symbol was created at the University of California Radiation Laboratory in Berkley in 1946. The design is supposed to represent activity radiating from an atom.

While the original symbol is still in use, the colors have changed. The first signs were printed with a magenta symbol on a blue background. These colors were chosen because they did not conflict with any other color code in use at that time. However, most workers felt that the blue background was not highly visible and it faded quickly, especially outdoors. In 1948, Oak Ridge National Lab used signs with magenta symbols and yellow backgrounds. Through the late 40s and early 50s, variations of the original Berkeley design were used. By the late 1950s, ANSI standards and federal regulations had standardized the current version of the radiation warning sign we use today. Current regulations also permit the use of black instead of magenta for these symbols. Outside of the United States, black on yellow is the most common color combination.

## How to Contact The Radiation Safety Staff

**Web Site:**  
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